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GOVERNMENT OF CANADA INVESTS IN SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN WATSON LAKE, YUKON

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WATSON LAKE, YUKON (August 18, 2008) - The Honourable Chuck Strahl, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, today announced funding for a project that will improve business and employment opportunities for the Liard First Nation in Watson Lake, Yukon.

"Our Government is taking real action to support initiatives like these that lead to concrete economic and social benefits for Aboriginal and Northern communities," said Minister Strahl. "This is one of the main goals of our integrated Northern Strategy."

The Liard First Nation Development Corporation (LFNDC) receives $245,000 over two years through Canada's Strategic Investments in Northern Economic Development (SINED) initiative on behalf of the First Nation to negotiate a Socio-Economic Participation Agreement (SEPA) with Selwyn Resources Ltd. Through this agreement the First Nation will be able to maximize socio-economic benefits from resource development in their traditional territory. The agreement could include jobs, training, contracts, and small business opportunities.

"I am delighted with this decision to support our partnership with Selwyn Resources," said Liard First Nation Chief Liard McMillan. "We're committed to working with Selwyn Resources to ensure that opportunities for education and training are in place to provide a skilled labour force to fill many of the human resource needs that will be required by the mining company. These funds will greatly support our vision for a healthier, productive community through a diverse work force and the royalty benefits that will accrue from resource development on Kaska traditional territory."

"Selwyn Resources is very pleased to learn of the announcement of the support of the Ministry of Indian Affairs and Northern Development in providing funding to the Liard First Nation to participate in the negotiation of a Socio-Economic Participation Agreement with Selwyn for the development of its Selwyn Project that straddles the Yukon and Northwest Territories border," said Justin Himmelright, Vice President of Environment and Community Affairs, Selwyn Resources. "We are pleased that the Liard First Nation have this financial support to allow the timely completion of the SEPA and we look forward to the commencement of formal negotiations with them and their participation in the development of this project."

Today's announcement reinforces the Government of Canada's commitment to advancing an integrated Northern Strategy that strengthens Canada's Arctic sovereignty, protects our northern environment, promotes northern social and economic development and improves and devolves northern governance.

Backgrounder - Socio-Economic Participation Agreement Between Liard First Nation And Selwyn Resources

For further information please contact:

Line Gagnon
Senior Communications Advisor
Indian and Northern Affairs Canada - Yukon Region
867-667-3315

Alex Morrison
General Manager
Liard First Nation Development Corporation
867-668-6850 or 332-7848
am_lfndc@yahoo.ca

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Liard First Nation Development Corporation (LFNDC) is a for-profit development corporation, owned by the First Nation. The development corporation will receive the funding on behalf of the First Nation, who will be signatory to the Socio-Economic Participation Agreement with Selwyn Resources Ltd. Selwyn Resources is the owner and operator of the Howard's Pass lead zinc property, which is located within the Liard First Nation and Ross River First Nation traditional territories.

The mine, once in production, is estimated to have a 40-year life span. The intent of the Socio-Economic Participation Agreement (SEPA) is to establish a positive relationship between the Liard First Nation and Selwyn Resources. It will help to ensure that the members of the Liard First Nation receive benefits from resource development on their traditional territory. It is anticipated that the SEPA will result in jobs, training opportunities, commercial contracts, and royalty payments to the First Nation. This agreement could result in hundreds of millions of dollars flowing to the Liard First Nation.

The Liard First Nation Development Corporation (LFNDC) receives $245,000 over two years through the Strategic Investments in Northern Economic Development (SINED) initiative's Targeted Investment Program.

Visit INAC's website for more information on the Strategic Investments in Northern Economic Development initiative.

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